THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI VEEREN-DRA PATIL): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a), (b) and (d) Pyrites can be used either for conversion to sulphuric acid or to elemental sulphur. Since sulphuric acid in large quantity cannot be carried economically for long distances, elemental sulphur is required to feed fertiliser plants all over the country. We have no indigenous source of elemental sulphur and at present our entire requirement of elemental sulphur is imported.

In order to exploit the indigenous pyrite resources Govt, set up sulphuric acid plants at Sindri based on Am-jhore pyrites. These plants, however, could not sustain operation and achieved only a very low capacity utilisation.

The plants therefore were closed and the Amjhore Mines also remained largely idle as a result, since November, 1982.

If the imports of sulphur are to be reduced to any appreciable extent. It would be necessary first to establish a technology for conversion of indigenous pyrite$_s$ to elemental sulphur. M/s. PPCL, a public undertaking is carrying out studies in thi$_s$ direction, with assistance from UNDP and foreign experts. Proposals - .from M/s. PPCL for utilisation of Amjhore Pyrites to produce sulphuric acid For SSP production by them are also separately under consideration.

(c) The quantity (with value) of Sulphur imported during 1983-84 and 1984-85 is as under: —

Year	Quantity (M/T)	C&F Value (Rs. Lakhs)
1983-84 . -	10,11,019	12,286.11
1984-85 .	13,08,607	22.422.14

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the pyrite production has been going down. The Government has also accepted this. Thirty-two sulphuric plants have closed down. The production is very much reduced. What they have not mentioned is why the production has gone down. Our information is that wherever there are pyrites plants and sulphuric acid is produced, the consuming centre has to be very close to the pyrites plant. There is a chemical reaction which jsets in. In this case, th$_e$ plant at Sindri is 400 kilometres away from Amjhore. The question is what does the Government propose to do as far as improving the production is concerned.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question House is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Handing over of the Telephone System in Metropolitan Cities to a Public Sector Corporation

*84. SHRI RAFICE ALAM:
SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose •to hand over the telephone system in Metropolitan cities to public $_s$ector corporations to improve their functioning; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIR-DHA): (a) and (b) A suggestion for creating a (separate corporate body to develop and operate the telephone services at Delhi and Bombay has been examined by an inter-ministerial committee. The Committee ha$_s$ submitted its report which is under consideration.